



May 15th, 2019

Honourable Michelle Mungall
Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources
P.O. Box 9049
Stn. Prov. Govt.
Victoria BC, V8W 9E2

Delivered by email: EMPR.Minister@gov.bc.ca

**RE: Imperial Metals Corporation, Notice of Work – Referral Number 109994684-011,
Exploration Work Permit Application, Mine Number 0700195.**

Dear Minister of Energy, Mines and Petroleum Resources

The Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission was created through the High Ross Treaty, a bi-lateral treaty between Canada and the United States with its assigned stewardship given to British Columbia and the City of Seattle. The Commissioners have articulated responsibilities contained within the treaty document that include the conservation and protection of wilderness and wildlife habitat, enhance recreational opportunities in the Skagit Valley, and the acquisition of mineral or timber rights consistent with conservation and recreation purposes.

Through distributions from endowment funds contributed by both British Columbia and the City of Seattle, the Commission facilitates these objectives by partnering with varying private and public interests and organizations including BC Parks and the US National Park Service. The work by the Commission and our partners include maintaining the ecological integrity of the Upper Skagit Watershed which supports a large and diverse ecosystem with important fish and wildlife populations. This transitional/bio-geoclimatic zone creates critical habitat for several unique species and species at risk including Western Spotted Owl, Grizzly Bear and Bull Trout. Moreover, due to its transboundary geography, this watershed provides critical corridors for all species, many of which have varying designations of conservation status in both the United States and Canada.

At present, seven species at risk as recognized under the Canadian Species at Risk Act that have been documented in/and or adjacent to this area. The Skagit River supports the largest populations of threatened steelhead and Chinook salmon in the Puget Sound, and the largest run of chum salmon in the United States. These fish are a critical food resource for the imperiled Southern Resident Killer Whales and are central to the culture and integrity of several Tribes both in the United States and Canada who have treaty rights to these important resources.

Additionally, the upper Skagit watershed is also a historic corridor and gathering place for Indigenous people. The upper Skagit encompasses the traditional and unceded territories of the Sto:lo, Nlaka'pamux and Lower Similkameen First Nations in Canada, and the Upper Skagit, Sauk-Suiattle, and Swinomish tribes in the United States.

When the Skagit Provincial Park was established in 1998, the “donut hole” lands were excluded because they contained the Giant Copper mineral claims, which are now owned by Imperial Metals. The Commission has been working to acquire these rights to ensure the preservation of the area as it is a vital part of the ecosystem at the headwaters of the Skagit River watershed.

We believe and submit that any work, logging or mining that includes exploration or development, within this area will have irreversible consequences to the surrounding and downstream ecosystems.

During our meeting with the Minister April 8th, 2019, we expressed our position: No exploratory activity within the “donut hole”, the remediation of the area from past activity by Imperial Metals and forming a partnership between the Province of British Columbia and SEEC to accomplish the purchase the mineral tenures.

Furthermore, the minister during this meeting, indicated that the government had provided direction to its ministries placing a high value on public input into their deliberations when considering applications of this nature.

We are cognisant of our unique role as a Commission appointed by the Government of British Columbia and City of Seattle as the result of the Canada-US High Ross Treaty, and as such the Skagit Environmental Endowment Commission is not an NGO or the “public” interest in this consideration. We are the Government’s (British Columbia and City of Seattle) appointed Commission to a bi-lateral international treaty that was created from the overwhelming public outcry when Seattle planned to raise the Ross Dam. British Columbia’s government was instrumental in harnessing the public interest and forging this international treaty “recognizing the desirability to preserving the natural environment of the Skagit Valley in the Province of British Columbia.”

We believe the public has spoken and that Canada’s government at that time and place, had listened and acted accordingly by initiating and signing on to this international treaty in good faith. We further believe that the Ministry has legal responsibilities based on the treaty between the United States and Canada to exercise its authority to ensure that mining activities within the upper Skagit River watershed be prohibited. Therefore, our position is that any permit for mineral exploratory activity within this area be unequivocally denied. British Columbia and the citizens of British Columbia and Washington State have already spoken; preserve the natural environment of the Skagit Valley.

Regards:



Thomas Curley
Canada Co-chair

OSB

Leo Bodensteiner
USA Co-Chair

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